



AFWERX
ADVENTURES

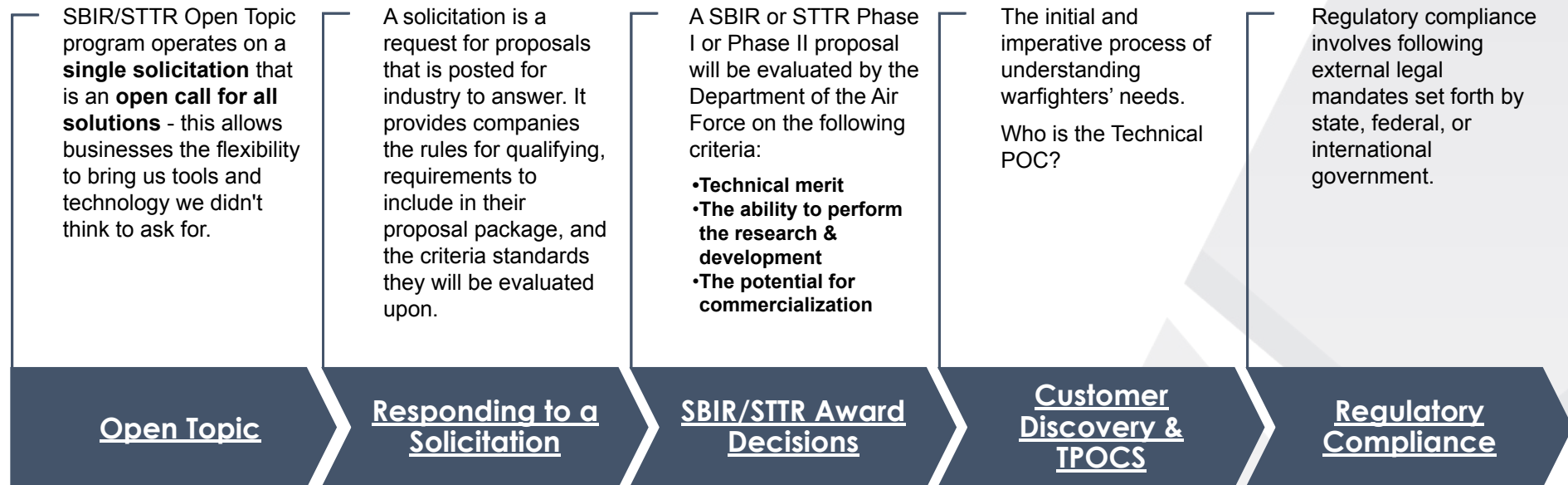
Open Topic FAQs



AFWERX ADVENTURES



Follow us @AFWERX



Open Topic FAQs

- **Are foreign or non-U.S. based companies eligible to apply?**
 - No, only United States small business concerns are eligible to submit applications to SBIR and STTR solicitations. Program eligibilities can be found at: https://www.sbir.gov/sites/default/files/elig_size_compliance_guide.pdf.
- **Do SBIR/STTR Phase IIs have the same requirements?**
 - STTR requires 30% of the work completed must be carried out by a University or Not for Profit institution.
- **Is the proposer required to have an Air Force user for Open Topic?**
 - Identification of a government customer or end user is not required for a Phase I proposal under the Open Topic Solicitations. Phase II proposals must include a signed memorandum by a Customer and End-User and a DAF Technical POC must be identified should the Small Business have an identified customer that demonstrates a defense need.
- **When is the Funding Agreement Certification due?**
 - All small businesses that are selected for SBIR/STTR award must complete this certification at the time of award and any other time set forth in the Funding Agreement that is prior to performance of work under this award. It can be found at: <https://www.afsbirsttr.af.mil/Portals/60/documents/SBIR%20Funding%20Certification%20-%20May%202021%20JPM.pdf>.
- **What is Direct to Phase II?**
 - A Direct to Phase II (D2P2) allows DoD to make a SBIR/STTR Phase II award to a small business concern with respect to a project, without regard to whether the small business concern was provided an award under Phase I of a SBIR/STTR program with respect to such project. DAF does not guarantee D2P2 opportunities will be offered in all future solicitations.
- **What is the difference between Phase II Extensions/Enhancements and Phase II Sequential?**
 - Open Topic does not use Extensions or Enhancements. Everything beyond Phase II is run through the STRATFI & TACFI programs. They have replaced a 2nd Phase II contract as was used in the old CRP program.
- **What is the difference between the STRATFI opportunity and the TACFI opportunity?**
 - Tactical Funding Increase (TACFI) program is focused on transitioning smaller-scale, tactical capabilities at the operational level. Through TACFI, small businesses can receive from \$375,000 to \$1.7 million in SBIR/STTR funds over a two-year period. For every dollar of SBIR/STTR funds, companies must also receive at least \$1 of other government funding (i.e., non-SBIR/STTR) OR \$1 of private funding.
 - Strategic Funding Increase (STRATFI) program is focused on large-scale, strategic capabilities at the DAF level. STRATFI offers small businesses between \$3 million and \$15 million in SBIR funds over a four-year period. Given the larger dollar size and strategic nature of the program, the matching requirements are more robust. For every \$1 of SBIR/STTR funds, companies must also receive \$2 of other government funds OR \$1 of other government funds and \$2 of private funds.

Solicitation & Proposal FAQs

- **Where can I find SBIR/STTR Solicitations?**
 - You may view the topics for active or archived Broad Agency Announcements (BAAs) at: <https://www.dodsbirsttr.mil/topics-app/>.
- **Why is the Solicitation important?**
 - The standard to which proposals are evaluated is directly associated to the solicitation.
- **How do I submit my proposal?**
 - All DoD SBIR/ STTR Phase I or Phase II proposals must be submitted through the online DoD Submission website at: <https://www.dodsbirsttr.mil/submissions>.
- **Are there samples available for Phase I and Phase II proposals?**
 - No, examples are not available. Proposals must be drafted in accordance with the solicitation.
- **Is it possible to apply to the Air Force Open Topic and other DoD solicitations with the same product?**
 - Yes, you can apply. However, for any DoD component you cannot have the same adaptation in multiple Phase IIs. You will have to select one customer, if awarded.
- **Can I submit my technology that does not match a Focus Area for consideration?**
 - Open Topic solicitations are available with each Broad Agency Announcement. The Open Topic submission allows small businesses to present a solution to an unidentified Air Force need. The proposal, contract and award process for these submissions are managed at an accelerated pace. Review the solicitation details carefully for specific instructions.
- **How important are Letters of Support? Is it beneficial to have a letter of support in our proposal package?**
 - Letters of Support are **not required**! The stronger the technical proposal, the better your chances for a Phase I award. If you are an established company with direct customers and commercial sales and you have a product that could be useful for the warfighter, you may submit a Direct to Phase II proposal.
 - There is no template for Letters of Support.
 - Letters of Support may come from potential technology end-users, i.e., customers, and corporate partners/collaborators are appropriate, as well as letters from actual or potential investors, but this does not count as the required Customer Memorandum..
- **Does a proposed effort have to be in science & technology?**
 - The SBIR/STTR program requires a proposal to meet R&D requirements. This is not limited to S&T fields and products, as long as the effort proposed contains the required R&D effort. SBIR/STTR funding cannot be awarded to COTS solutions, unless the product is undergoing research and development to fit a specific DoD need or testing to prove the product/technology.



SBIR/STTR Award Decisions FAQs

- **How does AFVentures determine if a solution is useful to an Air Force problem?**
 - Awards are made based upon three criteria: **Commercialization, Defense Need, and Technology Merit**. Defense need can still be demonstrated without having a Focus Area match, as long as the proposal demonstrates a defense need may reside.
- **Our company has funding commitments from outside investors. Will this increase the chances of our proposal being awarded?**
 - In accordance with 15 USC 638(dd)(7), investment by venture capital, private equity firms, or hedge funds **shall not** be used as an award criterion. Funding commitments related to the effort, whether from Government sources, as documented in the Air Force Customer Memorandum, or private sources, as documented through a letter of commitment, are evidence of commercialization potential.
- **Can a Phase III be awarded to a Phase I “Selectable, Not Funded” proposal?**
 - Yes, the adopting organization must provide funding as well as the resources to make the SBIR/STTR award. DoD organizations must formally request a transfer of the proposal by contacting AF.SBIR.STTR.Workflow@us.af.mil to start the process. If concurrence is given, AFWERX (FM, Contracting, administration, etc.) will transfer the pertinent documents enabling the DoD organization to make their own award.

<p>Selected - Your proposal has gone through the evaluation process and made the cut for award consideration. However, there are still more steps before an official award: contract clarifications and review for SBIR/STTR Funding qualifications.</p>	<p>Selectable, Not Funded - Your proposal has gone through the evaluation process and made the cut for award consideration, but did not make the cut to receive funding under the solicitation.</p> <p>However, this is not the end!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your SBIR/STTR is available for "adoption" by other AF or DoD components.• The proposal will be retained for 180 days from receipt of notification. If additional funds become available during this time, the proposal is considered for award.• Company is eligible to re-submit the proposal under a later solicitation or anywhere in the DoD.
<p>Not Selected - Your proposal has gone through the evaluation process and did not make the cut for award under the solicitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Official notices will be provided.• Debrief Summary will be offered for Criterion A, B & C<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Debriefs can ONLY come from a Contracting Officer• Companies are encouraged to consider the feedback provided in debriefs to strengthen the proposal and respond to the next open topic.	<p>Not Eligible - Your proposal has gone through the evaluation process and did not meet requirements under the solicitation for award consideration.</p> <p>Common Disqualifiers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Missing or incorrect CAGE Code/SAM registration• Proposal is not an R&D effort• Did not provide minimum required documents as outlined in the solicitation• Phase II - Customer Memorandum was not included or incorrect template was submitted <p>ONLY the Contracting Officer may communicate with the company to provide feedback via debrief.</p>



Customer Discovery & TPOC FAQs

- **How do I find a TPOC?**
 - The TPOC is appointed by the Customer Memorandum's Customer & End-User signatories.
 - **The Primary TPOC must be DAF military or civilian** that is committed and has a great understanding of the technology.
- **Does a Phase II TPOC have to be in AFRL?**
 - A TPOC may be any DAF civilian or military member (Air Force or Space Force). Keep in mind the TPOC should be a subject matter expert or tactically connected to the technology or defense need.
- **What are the rules for engaging potential customers and TPOCs?**
 - Be resourceful, but be respectful
- **Who are the End-Users and the Customer Organizations?**
 - Primary End-User Organization is the organization that stands to operationally benefit from the solution.
 - Primary Customer Organization is the organization that is responsible for acquiring the solution on behalf of the End-User.
- **I am pursuing a Direct to Phase II. Can I engage with a potential TPOC and sign a Customer Memorandum if I do not have a Phase II?**
 - Yes.
- **We have multiple organizations interested in our technology. Who should sign the Customer Memorandum? Can we submit multiple memorandums?**
 - This a great opportunity for Letters of Support. Only one memorandum is permitted in the Phase II proposal package.
- **What is the best way to find a DAF Customer?**
 - Utilize Focus Areas at: <https://www.afwerx.af.mil/AFV%20Overview.html>
 - Utilize Digital Platforms & the DoD Ecosystem
 - Learn the most about our program at: <https://www.afsbirsttr.af.mil/>
 - Locate a DAF Small Business Professional at: <https://www.airforcesmallbiz.af.mil/>
 - Reach out to the POCs listed on Tech Connect at: <https://airforcetechconnect.org/>



Regulatory Compliance

NOTICE OF OTHER CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS

At contract award, firms shall make certain legal commitments through a Government contract clause or article acceptance. The following outline illustrates required Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR)-based or Other Transactions provisions. The list is not complete, nor does it include full clause/article text. Complete general provision language is available by request prior to award.

- **Publication Approval:** Government review/approval is required prior to publication/dissemination, other than within/between the Contractor and subcontractors, if any, of classified and non-fundamental information resulting from contract performance or included in reports submitted under the contract.
- **Animal Welfare:** Contracts involving vertebrate animal research, development, test, evaluation, and/or training will include DFARS 252.235-7002.
- **Protection of Human Subjects:** Contracts including or potentially including research on human subjects IAW 32 CFR Part 219, DoD Directive 3216.02, and 10 USC 980, including that meeting the 32 CFR 219.101(b) exemption, will include DFARS 252.235-7004.
- **E-Verify:** Contracts exceeding the simplified acquisition threshold may include FAR 52.222-54, unless exempted as described in FAR 22.1803.
- **ITAR:** In accordance with DFARS 225.7901-4, Export Control Contract Clauses, the clause found at DFARS 252.225-7048 is included in all solicitations and contracts, including awards under this solicitation.
- **Cybersecurity:** SBIR awardees shall provide adequate security for covered contractor information systems. Specific security requirements are defined in DFARS 252.204-7012; compliance is mandatory.
- **Adequate COVID-19 Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors:** Class Deviation 2021-O0009 implements the requirements of Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors, dated September 9, 2021. It directs agencies to include a clause in certain contracts to ensure contractors comply with all guidance for contractor and subcontractor workplace locations published by the Safer Federal Workforce.





AFWERX ADVENTURES



Follow us @AFWERX